

REMARKS

By this Amendment, claims 1, 4, 10 and 17 are amended and claims 3, 5 and 16 are canceled without prejudice to, or disclaimer of, the subject matter recited therein. Thus, claims 1, 2, 4, 6-15, 17 and 18 are pending in this application. Support for the amendment to claim 1 can be found in original claims 3 and 5. Claim 10 is amended into independent form. Support for the amendment to claim 4 can be found in original claim 16. No new matter is added. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and prompt allowance of the pending claims in view of at least the following remarks.

Applicants appreciate the indication of allowable subject matter in claims 5, 10-14 and 16. As discussed below, independent claims 1, 4 and 10 are amended to incorporate allowable subject matter. Thus, all of the pending claims recite allowable subject matter.

The courtesies extended to Applicants' representative by Examiner Cantelmo at the interview held December 4, 2009, are appreciated. The following remarks incorporate Applicants' record of the interview.

I. Objection to the Drawings

The Office Action objects to the drawings as failing to comply with 37 C.F.R. §1.84(p)(5) because they include the reference character "15" in Fig. 1 which does not appear to be found in the written description. The Examiner's attention is directed to the specification at page 16, line 6, and page 18, line 5, for support of the reference character "15." Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection.

II. Rejection Under §102(b)

The Office Action rejects claims 1 and 17 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by JP 2000-090948 to Ouchi. Applicants have amended claim 1 to include the allowable subject matter of claim 5. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection.

The Office Action rejects claims 1, 2, 6, 15 and 17-18 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by JP 60-119081 to Koseki et al. (hereinafter "Koseki"). Applicants have amended claim 1 to include the allowable subject matter of claim 5. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-4 and 17 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by JP 2002-313404 to Tani. Applicants have amended claim 1 to include the allowable subject matter of claim 5. Additionally, Applicants have amended claim 4 into independent form including the allowable subject matter of claim 16. Also, claim 3 has been canceled. Thus, the rejection is moot. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection.

The Office Action rejects claims 1, 2, 6 and 17 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,366,818 to Wilkinson et al. (hereinafter "Wilkinson"). Applicants have amended claim 1 to include the allowable subject matter of claim 5. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection.

III. Rejection Under §102/§103

Claim 15 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over Wilkinson. The rejection is respectfully traversed. Applicants do not concede that Wilkinson teaches or suggests the features of dependent claim 15. However, it is unnecessary to separately discuss the features recited in the dependent claim given the existence of clear and distinguishing features in independent claim 1. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection.

IV. Rejection Under §103

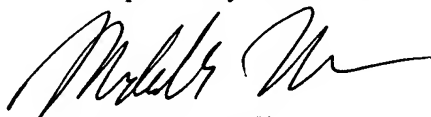
The Office Action rejects claims 7-9 and 18 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over Wilkinson as applied to claim 1 and further in view of JP 2003-077520 to Yamamoto et al. (hereinafter "Yamamoto").

Applicant does not concede that Wilkinson or Yamamoto, alone or in combination, teach or suggest the features of dependent claims 7-9 and 18. However, it is unnecessary to separately discuss the features recited in the dependent claims given the existence of clear and distinguishing features in independent claim 1. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of the claims are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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